We claim:

1. Oil from seeds, said oil comprising, an oleic acid content of more than 40 wt% and a stearic acid content of more than 12 wt% based on the total fatty acid content of said oil.

2. Oil according to claim 1, wherein the oleic acid content is from 55 to 75 wt%.

3. Oil according to claim 1, wherein the stearic acid content is from 15 to 40 wt%.

4. Oil according to claim 1, having a total level of saturated fatty acids of at least 20 wt%.

5. Oil according to claim 1, having a linoleic acid content of less than 20 wt%.

6. Oil according to to claim 1 wherein the sunflower oil has at least 90 w/w% of the saturated fatty acid groups in the 1 or 3 position.

7. Oil according to claim 6, wherein from 95 to 100 w/w% of the saturated fatty acid groups are in the 1 or 3 position.

8. Sunflower plant capable of producing seeds according to claim 1.

9. Method of obtaining a sunflower oil having an oleic acid content of more than 40 wt% and a stearic acid content of more than 12 wt% based on the total fatty acid content of said oil by extracting oil from the seeds according to claim 1.

10. Method according to claim 9, wherein said extraction process does not involve a substantial modification of the sunflower oil.

11. Method according to claim 10, wherein no substantial chemical or enzymatic rearrangement takes place and no substantial hardening.

12. Food product comprising a sunflower oil, said oil having an oleic acid content of more than 40 wt% and a stearic acid content of more than 12 wt% based on the total fatty acid content of said oil.

13. Food product according to claim 12, wherein the level of sunflower oil is from 3 to 100 wt%.

14 Food product according to claim 13 selected from the group of spreads, sauces, ice-cream, soups, bakery products and confectionery products.

15. Food product according to claim 14, being a spread in which the sunflower oil is used as a hardstock at a level of 5 to 20 wt%.

16. Cosmetic product comprising a sunflower oil, said oil having an oleic acid content of more than 40 wt% and a stearic acid content of more than 12 wt% based on the total fatty acid content of said oil.

17. Cosmetic product according to claim 16, wherein the level of sunflower oil is from 3 to 100 wt%.

18. Cosmetic product according to claim 17 selected from the group of creams, lotions, lipsticks, soap bars and skin or hair oils.

19. A process for selecting Helianthus annus plants, capable of producing the seeds of claim 1 comprising the steps of:
(a) selecting a number of Helianthus annus plants, the mature seeds whereof have a stearic acid content of at least 15 wt% based on the fat present in the seed;
(b) selecting a number of Helianthus annus plants, the mature seeds whereof have c;
(c) crossing said selected plants of (a) with the selected plants of (b).

20. A process according to claim 19 including the steps of:
(d) planting the seeds of the F1 obtained in claim 19;
(e) selecting from the F2 progeny those plants which produce seeds having an oleic acid content of more than 40 wt% and a stearic acid content of more than 12 wt% based on the total fatty acid content of said oil.

21. Sunflower meal or crushed seeds obtainable from the seeds according to claim 1.

22. Seeds capable of producing the sunflower oil according to claim 1.

23. An inbred sunflower plant having seeds with oil according to claim 1 including that said seeds have a thioesterase activity over stearoyl-ACP of at least 10% of the activity over oleyl-ACP.

24. An inbred sunflower plant having seeds with oil according to claim 23 including a maximum of 10 %, preferably up to 5% w/w of saturated fatty acids in the 2 position of a TAG molecule.